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Performing the Jeweled Pagoda Mandalas: Relics, Reliquaries, and a Realm of Text

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At first glance, the characters swirl around, haphazard and tiny (Figs. 1-3). Picking out a few familiar words provides temporary stability, but a moment later the viewer is lost again in a sea of shining script at once accessible and remote. Neither legible nor completely illegible, these discombobulating and intriguing characters are specifically *alegible*. This vision of a luxurious realm constructed of golden text gleaming against the deep blue background evokes the idea that the Sanskrit letter, A, begat the world.<sup>1</sup> Experiencing these paintings known as the jeweled pagoda mandalas (金字宝塔曼陀羅 *kinji hōtō mandara*) is like entering a state of captivating and, at times, bewildering visions, a world shaped by the artistic union of individual words. These mandalas are a category of highly textual paintings produced during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, whose inventive format unifies on a single visual plane the written transcription of sacred text with the painted vignettes of the chosen scripture's stories. Furthermore, by utterly dissolving the distinction between the two media in the central icon of the paintings, their combinatory composition embodies a new relationship between text and image. Word becomes picture as characters from the sacred scriptures replace architectural line, marking the start of a progressively more popular visual trend.

Three complete sets, each of eight or ten paintings, of the jeweled pagoda mandalas remain: those from the temple Ryūhonji in Kyoto (Fig. 4), Tanzan Shrine in Nara (Fig. 5), and Chūsonji, a temple in Hiraizumi<sup>2</sup> (Fig. 6), along with three other mandalas separated from their original sets.<sup>3</sup> On average, each painting transcribes two to four chapters of a particular scripture, either the *Lotus Sūtra*<sup>4</sup> or the *Golden Light Sūtra*,<sup>5</sup> into the shape of a pagoda with associated narrative vignettes positioned along the sides and bottom of the mandala. How exactly these particular religious establishments came to transcribe and pictorialize the scriptures in this format is not known. The origin of this style can be traced back to the earliest related example in China: a tenth-century textual pagoda composed of the *Heart Sūtra*<sup>6</sup> but lacking the encircling vignettes.

Previous scholarship has been primarily concerned with the formal analysis and iconographic study of the narrative vignettes surrounding the central icon. In this regard, the mandalas have been successfully and thoroughly explicated. By far the most extensive examination of the mandalas to date has been written by Miya Tsugio.<sup>7</sup> He was the first to identify possible prototypes in China and Korea. Miya also conducted an illuminating visual analysis of the narrative vignettes surrounding the central pagoda. While quite strong, the scholarship in English on the jeweled pagoda mandalas is sparse: only Willa Tanabe and Mimi Yiengpruksawan have discussed the mandalas in any real detail. In her book, *Paintings of the Lotus Sutra*, Tanabe analyzed the Tanzan Shrine and Ryūhonji mandalas as examples of the twelfth-century trend that emphasized narrative description of sūtra content in the art of the *Lotus Sūtra*.<sup>8</sup> She saw the jeweled pagoda mandalas as transitional works bridging conventional blue and gold illustrated sūtras and the pictorial transformation tableaux (変相 Jpn. *hensō*, Ch. *bianxiang*) or visualizations of miraculous transformations occurring in scripture.<sup>9</sup> Mimi Yiengpruksawan examines the Chūsonji jeweled pagoda mandalas in *Hiraizumi: Buddhist Art*

*and Regional Politics in Twelfth-Century Japan*.<sup>10</sup> Yiengpruksawan offers an elegant and contextualized study of the mandalas, interweaving the importance of the *Golden Light Sūtra* to the authoritative aims of the Ōshū Fujiwara and the intimate illustrations of the narrative vignettes that reveal the anxieties of the ruling family.<sup>11</sup> However, scholarship in both Japanese and English has largely neglected the critical role the central pagoda plays in the construction of the painting's meaning.

This article is therefore about the superficial. It is about the craft and design essential to creating elaborate textual images whose central icon is a reliquary composed almost entirely of scriptural characters. Most importantly, it is about how the very production of the surface asks a certain level of engagement from its viewers. The recent revival of attention paid to art's surface rejoices in the sometimes beautiful and always compelling artistic qualities of the object and asks not only what it takes to engage the surface, but also how such encounters complicate the putatively straightforward activity of viewing. Approaching the jeweled pagoda mandalas from this point of view expands our thinking about the demands of viewing as the progenitor of meaning and complicates the discourse on word and image that often presupposes an ontological divide. Furthermore, because of the lacunae in the records concerning the paintings' patronage, potential ritualistic function, and transferal history between temples, the jeweled pagoda mandalas are well suited for such a methodology that finds meaning in the surface.

I begin with a brief historical and philological discussion in order to introduce the mandalas. Explorations of the surface, including the transcription of the textual pagoda and the process of production for such innovative and expensive sets of paintings, prepares the stage for an argument grounded in these considerations. Doing so underscores the inherent performativity of the design and the effects of that on the viewer. The intertextual community of sūtra

transcriptions from the eleventh through thirteenth centuries demonstrates the broader trend toward more complicated interactions of text and image, and through comparison highlights the augmented roles of the two media in the mandalas. These complexities of collaboration require a performative viewing on the part of the audience that exposes two fundamental juxtapositions: accessibility and *alegibility*, and visibility and invisibility. Decoded through experiential engagement, the ultimate indivisibility of word and picture, sūtra and pagoda, and relic and reliquary is apprehended as a profound visualization of the multiplicity of Buddha body.

### **Nomenclature and Historical Issues**

A short, philological discussion is necessary in order to explore issues of terminology and present the elusive historical circumstances of the paintings. Unfortunately but not uncommonly, scant textual records remain to cast low light on the shadowy history of the production and reception history of the mandalas. And as is typical of premodern paintings, the extant records exhibit flexible nomenclature.

Ryūhonji's jeweled pagoda mandalas of the early thirteenth century capture in eight paintings the twenty-eight chapters of the *Lotus Sūtra*. The earliest textual evidence of the Japanese jeweled pagoda mandalas' existence comes in the form of an inscription on the back of each of the Ryūhonji scrolls. This black ink inscription documents the mandalas' location in Hōryūji, a Nara temple, at the time of its first recorded restoration in the seventh month of 1362.<sup>12</sup> Unfortunately, this illuminates little about the paintings' function and commission. Indeed, since formally and stylistically the paintings correspond to the early thirteenth century,<sup>13</sup> it is uncertain even if Hōryūji is the original home of the set.

In order to continue tracking the paintings, records associated with the temple must be consulted. A list of Hōryūji's treasures found in volume nineteen of the mid-fifteenth-century *Taishiden gyokurin shō* 太子伝玉林抄 documents eight *Lotus Sūtra* pagodas (法花八塔 *Hokke hattō*) housed in a box.<sup>14</sup> Slightly later, the record of temple effects, *Hōryūji shariden hōmotsu chūmon* 法隆寺舍利殿宝物註文, still locates the mandalas at Hōryūji during the inventory checks of 1550 and 1591.<sup>15</sup> In these two entries, the mandalas carry a similar description as in the *Taishiden gyokurin shō*. Both entries list them as eight *Lotus Sūtra* pagodas (1550: 法華之八塔 *Hokke no hattō* and 1591: 法花之八塔 *Hokke no hattō*). Based on these findings, it is apparent that Hōryūji was in possession of the mandalas from the mid-fourteenth century until the late sixteenth century. Returning to the objects themselves for information, a later inscription on the paintings testifies to another restoration in 1681 in Edo (modern day Tokyo), but by this time the paintings had entered the collection of Ryūhonji, evidenced by the temple's name at the end of the inscription. Exactly how Ryūhonji came to acquire the paintings is undocumented. Finally, inscriptions on the new boxes currently storing the paintings indicate Ryūhonji's contemporary take on the issue of terminology.<sup>16</sup> In titling the paintings *Pagoda of Lotus Sūtra Characters in Eight Scrolls* (法華經文字之宝塔八軸 *Hokekyō moji no hōtō hachijiku*), Ryūhonji continues the nomenclatural tradition. Without more evidence of patronage or function, it is difficult to speculate on the precise circumstances of Ryūhonji's set of paintings, or even to conclusively say that they originated in the monastic context.

The Tanzan Shrine<sup>17</sup> version also transcribes the *Lotus Sūtra* into the jeweled pagoda mandala format, but with the addition of two bracketing scriptures—the *Innumerable Meanings Sūtra*<sup>18</sup> as the prologue and *Contemplation of Samantabhadra Bodhisattva Sūtra*<sup>19</sup> as the epilogue—to form a set of ten mandalas dating from the twelfth century. A tantalizing

inscription written in 1652 on the outer lid of the box containing the paintings ambiguously mentions a temple roughly half a kilometer northwest of Tanzan Shrine called Shigaiji.<sup>20</sup> The records of Tanzan Shrine rarely refer to Shigaiji and when the temple does appear in the literature, it is only in records far closer to the present day than the twelfth century.<sup>21</sup> This mortuary temple was founded in 1187 in honor of the Tendai monk, Zōga Shōnin (917-1003).<sup>22</sup> Zōga's devotion to the *Lotus Sūtra* was renowned, and it is conceivable that this jeweled pagoda mandala set was commissioned for the founding of the temple to memorialize his dedication to the scripture. This possibility adds a commemorative function to the paintings and stresses the transference of merit through the copying of the sūtra, the adorning of the body of the Buddha with precious materials, and the construction of pagodas—a karmic confluence particular to this rare type of project. Both the techniques and style of the mandalas confirm a late twelfth-century production date.<sup>23</sup> The inscriptions on the boxes also reveal that in the mid-seventeenth century the paintings were designated as *Lotus Mandalas* (法華曼陀羅 *hokke mandara*).<sup>24</sup> Such a categorization suggests that at this time, the paintings were positioned within the context of Buddhist visual narrative traditions, perhaps in line with transformation tableaux, which pictorialized the content of the *Lotus Sūtra* in the form of vignettes encircling the textual pagoda.

Chūsonji's set of ten mandalas, visual translations of the *Golden Light Sūtra*, were likely commissioned around 1170 by Fujiwara Hidehira (d. 1189). But extant documents from the time of production until the early eighteenth century neglect to mention the paintings. And while little is known concerning the patronage of the three sets of jeweled pagoda mandalas in question, the Chūsonji version offers the clearest view of the commission circumstances. Hiraizumi during the Ōshū Fujiwara rule rivaled the Kyoto court in artistic commissions in terms of precious materials and the sheer scope of single projects. Documents like *Petition of the Bunji Era* (文治の注文

*Bunji no chūmon*) composed in 1189 for Minamoto Yoritomo (1147-99) by Chūsonji monks offer a glimpse of twelfth-century Hiraizumi and the extensive building campaigns of this three generation family of northern rulers.<sup>25</sup> The Ōshū Fujiwara during this time enjoyed great financial success, which in turn funded expensive and laborious artistic productions, including a center for sūtra copying (写経機関 *shakyō kikan*) known as *Chūsonjikyō* 中尊寺経.<sup>26</sup> The rarity of such sumptuous transcription projects like the Buddhist canon composed on blue paper in alternating lines of gold and silver inks commissioned by the patriarch, Fujiwara Kiyohira (1056-1128),<sup>27</sup> not to mention the many other sūtra transcriptions undertaken by the family,<sup>28</sup> indicates that copying the scriptures was an important ritual conveying the Ōshū Fujiwara's political and salvific ambitions.

In 1170 Fujiwara Hidehira was promoted to the constabulary position of 'pacification' general (鎮守府将軍 *chinjufu shōgun*); I agree with Mimi Yiengpruksawan and Miya Tsugio<sup>29</sup> that Hidehira's appointment to *chinju shōgun* is the most likely occasion for the production of the mandalas given the *Golden Light Sūtra*'s strong message of righteous authoritarian rule.<sup>30</sup> Additionally, the ceremony for Hidehira's surprising elevation took place at the imperial palace during the annual *saishōkō* 最勝講, an imperially sanctioned ceremony reaffirming the *Golden Light Sūtra* as guardian of the nation and legitimizer of imperial authority, a symmetry that Yiengpruksawan highlights as additional confirmation of Hidehira as the patron of the Chūsonji jeweled pagoda mandalas. Thus, these paintings proclaim the righteous authority of the patron in an avant-garde style.

In 1705, ten black lacquer boxes were gifted to house the Chūsonji paintings.<sup>31</sup> An inscription on the boxes records the early eighteenth-century title: *Ten World Jeweled Pagoda Mandala* (十界宝塔絵曼荼羅 *Jikkai hōtō e mandara*).<sup>32</sup> In 1968, the Japanese Agency for



Cultural Affairs categorized the paintings as a National Treasure of Japan and gave them the official appellation, *Konshi chakushoku konkōmyōsaishōōkyō kinji hōtō mandara zu* 紺紙著色金光明最勝王經金字宝塔曼荼羅図 (a title that translates somewhat awkwardly into English as *Jeweled Pagoda Mandala of the Golden Light Sūtra in Gold Letters with Polychrome on Blue Paper*), thus establishing the standardized title for this set of paintings.

My decision to use “jeweled pagoda mandalas” stems from three considerations. The first is that to use the titles “pagoda sūtra” or “transformation tableaux” risks minimizing the complexity of the composition. These mandalas are a far more complicated visual and conceptual affair. I therefore include the term “mandala,” which is supported by some of the earliest textual references to the paintings, in order to acknowledge the composition in its entirety.<sup>33</sup> As Elizabeth ten Grotenhuis notes, the categorical fashion of applying the term “mandala” to paintings outside the definitional sphere of standard esoteric mandalas began in the early eleventh century.<sup>34</sup> The jeweled pagoda mandalas were clearly part of this trend.

The second consideration involves my use of the term “pagoda.” This word originates from the early sixteenth-century Portuguese “pagode,” a term of uncertain derivation traced to Dravidian via Sankrit as well as Persian beginnings.<sup>35</sup> But despite these etymological issues, pagoda has become part of the art historical lexicon for its ability to acknowledge the visual discrepancies between the tower-like architectural structures of East Asia and the reliquarial mounds of India called stūpas.<sup>36</sup> I also use “reliquary” to refer to the central icon of the jeweled pagoda mandalas, and in doing so, I intended for this term to signify the function of the pagoda as an architectural reliquary housing the relics of the Buddha. It is a shorthand that stresses the somatic connections of this type of structure and is not meant to flatten the multidimensionality

of pagodas which also served as beacons of Buddhist power or to visually conflate it with the various smaller types of reliquaries so popular in Japan during the premodern period.

The third nomenclatural hurdle is the application of jeweled or treasure pagoda (*hōtō* 宝塔) to the mandalas, occurring for the first time in the early eighteenth century with the inscription on the box housing the Chūsonji set. This appellation has since been applied with some consistency to both the Chūsonji and Ryūhonji sets and less frequently to the Tanzan Shrine set. It is a curious choice to make because a jeweled pagoda typically refers to a specific style of one-storied pagoda characterized by a rounded core and a four-sided roof with a finial. These pagodas are associated with the eleventh chapter of the *Lotus Sūtra*, in which a past Buddha Prabhūtaratna (多宝如来 Jpn. Tahō nyorai, Ch. Duobao rulai) miraculously appears in a flying jeweled pagoda during Śākyamuni's lecture of the sūtra. Śākyamuni ascends and continues preaching while seated next to Prabhūtaratna.

Practically speaking, a one-storied pagoda would not be sufficient space for the transcription of the sūtras. However, the mandalas of Ryūhonji make a clear reference to this moment by featuring the double Buddha imagery, which neither the Chūsonji nor Tanzan Shrine versions do. Possibly, the vision of an opened pagoda with one or two seated Buddhas was a strong enough allusion to this momentous occasion to warrant the jeweled pagoda appellation. Another possible explanation is that the central icon of the mandalas might be considered a jeweled pagoda because of the golden luminosity of the characters building the body of the reliquaries. Pushing this further, these golden apparitions are actually characters, which are in turn the dharma relics of the Buddha (or the written teachings of the Buddha venerated as sacred relics) and therefore in essence treasure. I continue this nomenclatural tradition because it has become a standard part of modern art historical writing.

## Diagramming the Pagoda

Without intimate knowledge of the design, the exact choreography of the transcription of text into pagoda can seem impenetrable. Where does one start? Understanding the exacting construction of the reliquary by mapping the textual pagoda of Ryūhonji's first fascicle (Fig. 4), so chosen because of the painting's excellent preservation and clear transcription, forms the foundation crucial for interpreting the mandalas.<sup>37</sup> Experiencing the textual acrobatics encourages a performative viewing and sparks contemplations of the utter indivisibility of word and picture from which the paintings' make their ultimate statement of signification. Because a full written account of the transcription's long journey would be likely tedious to read, the associated digital project mapping the sequence of the text animates the possible transcription process.<sup>38</sup>

Much of the transcription follows the typical conventions of Japanese script, moving from right to left and top to bottom. From the start, the copyists privilege the accuracy of the pagoda's shape and inclusion of key architectural components over the legibility of the scriptural characters. The pagoda begins with the title and opening passages of the sūtra running vertically down the long spine of the finial (Fig. 1). The transcription winds its way down the nine floors of the reliquary and in general moves from right to left (Fig. 2-3). It concludes on the bottommost step of the platform. But even with this adherence to copying convention, reading the characters presents multiple challenges, and in tracking the text, the adventurous reader continually experiences location and de-location.

Take for example the transcription of the complex bracketing system supporting the floors of the pagoda and the ornamental decorations projecting out from the corners of each roof

(Fig. 2). Starting on the right side, the axes of the textual tail rafters are realigned horizontally so that the characters pose on their sides and dangle out into the surrounding blue. The copyists then transcribe the bells hanging from the edge of the eaves, including the clapper, adding a sonorous dimension to the visual. The next string of scripture relocates to a somewhat surprising position, as the reader must leap over already transcribed sections in order to reconnect with the text at the brackets on the right side. The architecturally accurate three-on-one bracket system supporting the roof structure features the fundamental components of the large bearing block, upon which the bracket arm rests, and the three smaller bearing blocks atop the bracket arm. At multiple points in constructing the brackets, single characters stand alone in order to function as architectural design rather than part of a sequence of text. The transcription continues across the breadth of the pagoda body, to the three tail rafters sweeping to the left and on their sides, and finally to the scripted bell waiting to sound.

Throughout the copying of the pagoda, characters are repeatedly written on their sides, forced into contortions to fit small spaces, and appear as solitary components unconnected to the characteristics of a coherent text. Perhaps most challenging are the abrupt directionality switches and leaps about the pagoda to different architectural spots making it difficult to discover the next string of scripture. Any intrepid viewer who chose to encounter the mandalas on such a detailed and intimate level would most likely be motivated by a curiosity to solve the word puzzle. And by diagramming these maneuvers, it becomes clear that the audience of the jeweled pagoda mandalas was not intended to read large sections of the scripture for content. Confronting the very *un-text* like nature of this highly textual composition solidifies the need to consider the type of viewing obliged by such an creative design, along with alternative interpretations of the function of scripture in this context and what that can reveal about texts' premodern condition.

## **Process of Production**

The persons responsible for the design of the jeweled pagoda mandalas were most likely aware of Chinese prototypes in the form of circulated prints of textual pagodas, which most likely being made of paper and ink have not survived to testify to their influence.<sup>39</sup> However, the addition of the narratives seems to be a uniquely Japanese creation. Certainly in the case of the jeweled pagoda mandalas, extensive planning would have been critical, not only in the selection of narrative vignettes<sup>40</sup> but especially in the dramatic transcription of the sūtra into a pagoda. Rough sketches mapping out the transcription would have been vital in knowing such things as the appropriate number of lines and the spacing between them as well as the approximate end of the transcription. Because more than one copyist worked on the sets of eight to ten paintings,<sup>41</sup> these sketches likely served as crucial references available for frequent consultation. It should be noted that these sketches did not always ensure complete accuracy of transcription. An attempt is made to end each pagoda in the Ryūhonji set with the last characters of the scripture followed by the explanatory attachment indicating the title of the sūtra and the volume number. Scroll one and two end much as planned. However, the transcription becomes more complicated after this. Volumes three, five, seven, and eight lack the length required to construct the large reliquary and so verses are attached to the conclusion of the last chapter which is then appended by the sūtra title and volume number.<sup>42</sup> Volume four makes do with an abridged title of the sūtra to the end of the eleventh chapter.<sup>43</sup> Battling the opposite transcription challenge, volume six is too long to fit completely and so the remainder is omitted and concluded with the same formula of sūtra title and volume number.<sup>44</sup> These adjustments that do not uphold the accuracy of the text demonstrate the primacy of the pagoda graphic and reinforce the interpretation that the scripture was not

meant to be read in its entirety. Instead, such modifications and pictorial manipulations speak to the wealth of premodern scripture's functions beyond the exegetical.

Copying itself is by nature an *alegible* activity, regardless of the form the final scripture takes. Even when composing conventional sūtra scrolls of tidily spaced lines of seventeen characters,<sup>45</sup> writing and reading for content do not go hand in hand. However, while the activity that produced them is fundamentally the same, the jeweled pagoda mandalas retain the *alegibility* that originated them. When the characters are viewed individually, they are crisp and clear but as the text was not meant to be read synoptically, this legibility morphs into *alegibility* for the greater composition. Therefore, simply casting them as illegible reduces the inherent quality of the characters and the overall purpose of the text that never sought readability. But of course, the priority of calligraphed characters so often concentrated on the pictorial nature of written word. Considerations such as balance, spacing, form, weight, and hue of the individual characters can even preempt the semantic content.<sup>46</sup> In this way, the very appreciation of calligraphy for its aesthetic attributes can cast them as largely *alegible*, too.

The wealth invested in each set ensured careful preparation and precision of execution to prevent the waste of such precious materials as gold and silver inks and rich indigo dye, which while not uncommon in illuminated sūtra transcriptions, would nonetheless have imparted the mark of material value. Even the paper upon which the transcription was copied was a commodity. Describing the assembly process of the complicated pagoda and its many compositional components indicates the scale of skill, labor, and funding required. Given the demands of such a vast copying project, a traceable pattern based on the preliminary sketches would have ensured consistency of shape and size across all mandalas of a particular set. Close

scrutiny of the paintings identifies grooved marks left by an iron stylus that sketched out the complete design and provided the copyists a path for their brush.<sup>47</sup>

A formal analysis of the three sets of mandalas suggests that the pagoda form was executed first in the process of production. This idea is supported by the entrance of the narrative vignette edges into the space of the pagoda, many times encroaching quite close to the architecture, and thus necessitating that the pagoda be finalized before the narrative vignettes were completed. On the other hand, given that multiple sheets of paper were used in the construction of the large composition, contemporaneous production of both the pagoda and narratives is possible with the final touches to the scenes being added later after the sheets were joined. It is also possible that the surrounding narratives were not painted until all the papers of the mandala were joined. Although, this seems unlikely given the extra care such a sequence would require. The development and construction of the paintings point to a workshop setting where multiple trained painters of Buddhist subjects and copyists of Buddhist texts executed a consistent style.

Another possible scenario for production can also be considered. Given that sketches and predetermined grooves based off the traceable pattern marked the path for transcription, perhaps the patrons themselves copied the scripture for karmic merit.<sup>48</sup> As multiple sheets of paper were used in the construction of the large mandalas, the patrons could have completed the copying portion of the project, after which the narrative vignettes painted by professional artists would be attached. Such significant participation from patrons has precedence. The *Tale of Flowering Fortunes* (栄花物語 *Eiga monogatari*), an eleventh-century epic story centered on the life and career of the powerful regent, Fujiwara Michinaga (966-1028), describes an elaborate scene of courtly copying. During a particularly melancholic time in the ninth month of 1021, the ladies-

in-waiting of Empress Kenshi (1057-84) proposed an ambitious transcription project: each of the attendants along with close relatives would produce a sumptuous scroll dedicated to one chapter of the *Lotus Sūtra*.<sup>49</sup> The resulting scrolls were quite extravagant. Some composed the sūtra in gold on a blue background; others incorporated illustrations either above or below the text or as a frontispiece. Most of the scrolls were lavishly decorated with the seven treasures (七宝 *shippō*; gold, silver, agate, lapis lazuli, coral, crystal, and pearl), and the sūtra rollers and boxes were bejeweled.

But apart from the practical considerations of the surface's production and who exactly brushed these radiant characters, personal and conceptual changes are also at work. As the jeweled pagoda mandalas depart from conventional copying methods, how does this style of transcription alter the copyists' relationship to the scripture itself? How does the copyist respond to a re-encounter with a section of text that they have shaped into a finial or spread out to form an eave bracket? For the viewer of the mandalas, the relationship to the text is complicated by its graphic manipulation. Because few would have been shown the roadmap of the pagoda or granted the quantity of time needed to discover it on their own, the complex assemblage of characters allows for the viewers to experience the sūtra in their own highly personal ways.

### **Intertextuality<sup>50</sup> of the Jeweled Pagoda Mandalas**

Whether uttered aloud, committed to written word, or even inscribed within the mind,<sup>51</sup> the nature and quality of text have inspired volumes of philosophic discourse. Clearly, the ubiquity of text across cultures and history has made it a constant companion, yet the mutable borders of text confound strict definitions and challenge interpretations seeking to limit its breadth. The Japanese jeweled pagoda mandalas were singular among their contemporaries for their extensive



use of textual images. However, the textualized stage, as it were, was set for the paintings' production.

The structural divide between text and image in Buddhist art, which often assigns picture to the frontispiece of the scroll and word to the subsequent lengths, began to break down around the time of the mandalas' production. The following examples describe the intertextual scene at the time of the jeweled pagoda mandalas' production in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Scrolls such as the *One Character, one Buddha Lotus Sūtra* (一字一仏法華經 *Ichiji ichibutsu hokekyō*, Fig. 7), the section of "The Bodhisattva Wonderful Sound" of the *Lotus Sūtra*, with pagoda decoration (Fig. 8) in the format of *One character, one jeweled pagoda Lotus Sūtra* (一字一宝塔法華經 *Ichiji ichihōtō hokekyō*),<sup>52</sup> and the segment of "Peaceful Practices," with canopy and pedestal decoration (Fig. 9) in the format of *One character, canopy, and lotus pedestal Lotus Sūtra* (一字天蓋蓮台法華經 *Ichiji tengai rendai hokekyō*) pair the sacred characters with accompaniments such as adjacently seated Buddhas, enshrining pagodas, and crowning canopies and supporting lotus pedestals, thus bridging the chasm between text and image. These scrolls demonstrate a heightened but still limited interaction. However, they are particularly relevant to the jeweled pagoda mandalas, in that they too visually expound the nonduality of the Buddha and his word, which casts scriptures as dharma relics. The fundamental difference between these scrolls and the jeweled pagoda mandalas is that in the mandalas, the nonduality of the Buddha and his teachings reaches new expressive heights by achieving a visual format that mirrors the conceptual indivisibility. This conflated central icon of the mandalas thus encourages experiential viewing, while the designs of the handscrolls do not require performative engagement.

The twelfth-century *Lotus Sūtra* fans such as those in the temple collection of Shitennōji in Nara combine the graphic styles associated with illustrated scrolls like *The Tale of Genji Scrolls* (源氏物語絵巻 *Genji monogatari emaki*) with the recognizable writing and structural style of typical sūtra copies, and in doing so, visualize the interpenetration of sacred writing with images of the mundane world (Fig. 10). As Komatsu Shigemi observes, the fans and related booklets are visual testaments to the coupling of Heian period (794-1185) aristocratic belief in the *Lotus Sūtra* and the pious expression of that faith.<sup>53</sup> Instead of segregating image from text, scenes of daily court life along with visions from the world of commoners show through from behind the superimposed scripture. This layering represents a joining of two distinct media previously forced to inhabit different spatial realms of visual culture. But while text and image are combined into one visual plane of the product—and this on its own represents an important marker in the increasingly complicated visual relationship of text and image—word and picture still enact their own roles and maintain their functional and visual independence to a large extent.

The *Eyeless Sūtra* (目無経 *Menashikyō*) refers to an intriguing set of sūtra scrolls associated with Retired Emperor Goshirakawa (1127-1192), wherein scriptural text is copied over a black ink underdrawing of pictures of interior court life, with the curious exception that most of the figures are left without facial features (Fig. 11). The style of the pictures represents typical Heian period narrative illustrations, but the content of the underdrawing has yet to be firmly linked to a particular story. While the exact circumstances of the scrolls' production in 1192 remain elusive,<sup>54</sup> what seems likely is that Goshirakawa died before the completion of the picture scroll. As a memorial act intended to grant repose for the departed, the scroll was left unfinished and sūtra text was copied over the object closely related to the emperor, thus

establishing a karmic bond between the deceased and the redemptive powers of the sūtras. The interpenetration of word and picture in this context reveals a commemorative effort.

Increasing collaboration between word and picture is also evident in the practice of “reed-hand script” (葦手 *ashide*). This type of disguised script is often found in marsh-like landscapes where Chinese characters and Japanese phonetic script form simple images such as rocks, reeds, coast lines, and birds in flight. Komatsu Shigemi provides a rich analysis of the motifs assumed by reed-hand script in his study of the *Heike nōkyō* 平家納経, an extravagant project featuring thirty-three scrolls transcribing multiple sūtras and commissioned in 1164 by Taira Kiyomori (1118-81) for dedication at Itsukushima Shrine on Miyajima. He finds that certain phonetic characters are routinely chosen to construct particular and specific pictures because their shape lends them naturally to common forms.<sup>55</sup> One finds here the visualization of the world as text, a revelation that the scripture penetrates all manner of things in our world. The practice of *ashide* extended broadly into many different formats and contexts of writing. While the script crafted by *ashide* often could be constructed into meaningful passages of sūtra text or popular verses of poetry (和歌 *waka*), *ashide* also had a purely decorative function as well.

Before returning to the jeweled pagoda mandalas, it is necessary to briefly introduce another development in the text and image relationships of early premodern Buddhist painting: that of the empowered inscriptions.<sup>56</sup> These images emphasize the utter abandonment of graphic picture and the assumption of strictly textualized compositions where word alone paints the picture that graphic image once captured. The *Great Mandala* of Nichiren Shōnin (1222-1282) exemplifies this phenomenon.<sup>57</sup> In the *Great Mandala* (Fig. 12), text through calligraphic expression becomes the image. Both celebrated and reviled, Nichiren was a fervent proponent of the *Lotus Sūtra* as the supreme Buddhist authority subsuming all other doctrines and praxis.<sup>58</sup>

Nichiren's advocacy of the *Lotus Sūtra* as the ultimate authority and the sūtra's emphasis on text and language-oriented practice<sup>59</sup> is reflected in his promotion of the sūtra's title (題目 *daimoku*) as the mantra, *namu myōhō rengekyō* 南無妙法蓮華經 (homage to the *Lotus Sūtra*). According to Nichiren, the title of the scripture contained within its five characters the power to imminently realize buddhahood (即身成仏 Jpn. *sokushin jōbutsu*).<sup>60</sup> In an essay written in 1260, Nichiren responded to a question about the appropriate object of worship for those who are dedicated to the *Lotus Sūtra*: "First of all, as to the object of worship, you may use the eight rolls of the *Lotus Sūtra*, or a single roll, or one chapter, or you may inscribe the title and make it the object of worship."<sup>61</sup> This passage reflects the germinating seed for the *Great Mandala*, a textual composition depicting the venerated title of the scripture in calligraphic script running vertically down the center of the scroll. The names of Śākyamuni and Prabhūtaratna as well as those of other deities populating the ten realms flank the central *Lotus Sūtra* title, calligraphically recreating the assembly at Vulture Peak.

Nichiren's mandala represents yet another twist in the relationship of text and image. Graphic image, in conventionalized form, is completely abandoned in the *Great Mandala*. We find no anthropomorphic Buddha figures, no text restructured to create an image. Instead Nichiren and his followers fashion a calligraphic inscription, itself an image of exceptional fluidity and grace. What emerges after brush has left paper is not just written word, but a portrait of the infinite soteriological powers of the *Lotus Sūtra*, in effect a textual image. The *Great Mandala* manifests an increased textualized dynamic between word and picture. Rather than the cohabitation of text and image, the *Great Mandala* demonstrates a complete usurpation of picture by text in a realm traditionally dominated by graphic image. Other examples of

empowered inscriptions in which text is privileged occur with increasing frequency in the fourteenth through nineteenth centuries.<sup>62</sup>

Inventive collaborations trend toward a greater role of text within the visual space of paintings, from the limited forays seen in the scrolls enshrining each character with a pagoda, to the layering of text upon image as in the *Lotus Sūtra* fans, to word masquerading as picture in the *Heike nōkyō* scrolls and on a much grander scale the jeweled pagoda mandalas, to the usurpation of image by text in the *Great Mandala*. The intertextuality of the mandalas with earlier and contemporary paintings discussed here and between the sets themselves creates a referential system of emergent, acquired, and sustained understandings about how objects should look and what they mean.

### **Role Reversals of Text and Image**

While emerging from a coherent copying tradition, the jeweled pagoda mandalas are nevertheless the vanguard of innovative text and image interactions by challenging the conventional functions associated with its constituent parts through deliberate role reversals of word and picture. As demonstrated in the diagramming of the pagoda, the sūtra text relinquishes its discursive properties. The vignettes must now assume the role of transmitting content through graphic visualizations of the scripture's didactic episodes.<sup>63</sup> Although, they are assisted by cartouches that do not participate in the role reversals at work in the mandalas. The cartouches offer a clear instance of highly legible writing in a painting known for its iconic manifestation of text. In the Ryūhonji scrolls, the cartouches are mostly brief quotations from the *Lotus Sūtra* corresponding to the associated narrative vignette. Given the sporadic assemblage of the vignettes that prevents an easy, sequential trail, cartouches could serve as helpful signposts. Most

scenes are accompanied by a short cartouche, although not all are. At their most minimal, only a few words are written. Given their abbreviated nature, the cartouches likely worked in tandem with the vignettes in the communication of content, serving as reminders rather than bearing the weight of full narrative expression.<sup>64</sup> Many of the scenes depict pre-established iconography, and so the premodern viewer would perhaps recognize the scenes. For the vignettes unknown to the viewer, cartouches might give just enough to jog the recollection of the story.

As an example of such graphic reading, I analyze a few episodes from the twenty-third chapter of the *Lotus Sūtra*, “Former Affairs of the Bodhisattva Medicine King,” as depicted in the seventh scroll of the Ryūhonji set (Fig. 13) in order to explain the way in which the narrative vignettes are read for their doctrinal content. The chapter begins by describing the extraordinary devotion of the Medicine King Bodhisattva (藥王菩薩 Jpn. Yakuō bosatsu, Ch. Yaowang pusa; Skt. Bhaiṣajyarāja bodhisattva) to the *Lotus Sūtra* and his promise to commit self-immolation in gratification.<sup>65</sup> The Buddha reconstitutes the Medicine King Bodhisattva, who immediately returns to the presence of the Buddha, bowing in obeisance and offering prayers. The Buddha informs the Medicine King Bodhisattva of his decision to enter parinirvāṇa, the physical death of the body and the passage into nirvāṇa, that same night.

The scene of parinirvāṇa is found in the lower left corner of the mandala (Fig. 14); this episode illustrates the Buddha lying prone on a raised dais, surrounded and worshiped by his disciples, heavenly deities, and mythical animals. The vignette above the parinirvāṇa scene is a depiction of the Buddha’s instructions to the Medicine King Bodhisattva to build 84,000 reliquaries for the dissemination of his relics: ““After my passage into extinction, whatever śarīra [corporeal relics] there may be I entrust to you also. You are to spread them about and broadly arrange for offerings to them. You are to erect several thousand stūpas.””<sup>66</sup> Following the

pictorial illustrations in a clockwise path, the next episode describes the creation of corporeal relics (Fig. 15): the cremation of the Buddha on the funeral pyre. Along the right side of the mandala and in the middle of the long, narrow band of pictorial illustrations are located two more episodes detailing the past life of the Medicine King Bodhisattva. After completing his task, the Medicine King Bodhisattva offers his forearms to the fire because he remains unsatisfied by his donations of the reliquaries. Figure 16 illustrates the Medicine King Bodhisattva extending his forearms engulfed in flames toward three pagodas in a passionate gift of his body.<sup>67</sup> Below this scene, viewers find the Medicine King Bodhisattva seated in the lotus position, moments after his offering has been made and slender wisps of smoke trail from his truncated arms. Worshippers gather round his figure. This is the last scene illustrated from the twenty-third chapter of the *Lotus Sūtra*.

This role assumed by image is not unlike that of other Buddhist visual narratives. But in a context where narrative text is included, it is unusual that so much of the task falls to the responsibility of visual depiction alone. Thus in order to encounter the many parables and episodes within the scripture, the design compels the viewer to confront the *Lotus Sūtra* tales, not through discursive textual examination, but visually, by decoding the system of signs at work, many of which refer to the particular tale and others that refer beyond it—in effect by *reading* the pictures. In this way, image in the form of pictorial vignettes assumes the role of visual text.

But there is also image in the form of the pagoda as imagined through actual text. And from a distance, the pagoda succeeds in becoming that picture, rendering the jeweled pagoda mandala a composite of word and picture role reversals. This perspective is fleeting and inevitably ruptured once the viewer draws closer, for this is no normal text. The sūtra jettisons its expository role by virtue of the incredibly small size of the characters and its structural

manipulation into a graphic image. The text continues in order, and the copyists take care to avoid transcription errors, which when they occur usually amount to little more than an added or missed character.<sup>68</sup> The *alegible* text is in fact utterly legible, character by character.

Additionally, when choreographing the pagoda's construction, characters combined to form words are separated, undercutting their semantic function. The choice to downplay the ease of reading by separating these compound characters is made despite the freedom of the copyists to extend the line and maintain the integrity of the word, because even though the pagoda is roughly symmetrical along the vertical axis, mirrored lines do not necessarily contain the same number of characters. Thus, while text is sequentially connected, copied with few errors, and retains its legibility in a fashion, reading the scripture for content becomes infeasible. No longer for exegetical analysis, text instead becomes an artistic device and an emblem of redemptive and soteriological power.

The mandalas manifest a further transformation of text: the intensification of the visual properties of word. Thus, the scripture of the written reliquary experiences a reversal of the conventional roles of text transcending that of typical sūtra copies: the textual pagoda becomes graphic image in function and appearance. The jeweled pagoda mandala format is a discovery of text, both in the pagoda and in the narrative vignettes, because nothing remains what it seems: word is picture and picture is word. Thus text and image experience a role reversal of their conventional functions. As Mimi Yiengpruksawan asserts, "doctrine and image at once reinforce and subvert one another, and ... the friction so generated enriches readings of all Buddhist objects be they words or pictures."<sup>69</sup> As such, it is possible to interpret the role reversal evinced in the jeweled pagoda mandalas as a subversion of text by image and vice versa. The mandalas expose the intertwined roles of two previously distinct media, creating a vacillating, surreptitious



relationship between written word and pictorial image. When the combined visual effects of the boundary pushing mandalas are considered, we realize the full consequence of the role reversals occurring and reoccurring in a single painting and the rarity of this sort of combinatory composition.

### **Viewing as Performance**

Exploring the mechanics of viewing the mandala's surface, that is, the operations performed by the audience as obliged by the design, uncovers the painting's inherent performativity, which provides the viewer with the opportunity to experientially encounter the multiplicity of the Buddha's body. In the context of Japanese Buddhist art, such an exploration must contend with the issue of hidden objects. Even if the viewership is restricted to the artisans who made it and a patron with a small circle of intimates, this exclusive audience does not negate the visuality of the object. As discussed above, the likely audience for these objects at the time of production would have been the clergy of Shigaiji and Hōryūji, if indeed these were the original temple homes, and members of the Ōshū Fujiwara family and clergy of Chūsonji, and as the display history of the mandalas is nonexistent, the frequency with which they were seen is unclear. In the cultural context of premodern Japan, limited access was the standard and precious works of exquisite production were rarely seen. Yet, this does not diminish the intentionality of the design and the meaning thus extrapolated, nor the careful craftsmanship and the performativity the surface compels.

Because of their overall size<sup>70</sup> and combinations of textuality and encircling narrative vignettes, the jeweled pagoda mandalas oblige a performance on the part of the viewer.

Originally produced as either hanging scrolls or as panels of a folding screen, the paintings were

meant to be viewed in their entirety. Once unfurled, the large sets of eight or ten paintings would dominate a room in suffusions of blue and gold. From a distance, the viewer does not register the pagoda's profound textuality. But these paintings pack a hidden punch. What appears from afar as inert or slightly fuzzy linework constructing the image of a pagoda deconstructs upon closer examination, vitiating the solidity and continuity of our initial perception. Indeed, the fuzzy quality hints to the viewer of something more, beckoning them close. With this greater intimacy, the icon reveals itself to be both pagoda and sūtra. The disaggregation of the shape into textual characters from the scriptures occurs in multiple steps, announcing the inherent dynamism of the mandala. An overall transformation occurs during the initial approach in which line dissolve into tiny, individualized characters forming the body of the pagoda, establishing that this central icon is in fact a textual reliquary erected of dharma, or the teachings of the Buddha. Upon more intimate inspection, the dynamic arrangement and twisting movements of the characters emerge as the eye attempts to trace a line of text, stumbling upon characters that flip and turn and dangle over deep blue space. It is at this point that the pagoda relinquishes much of its pictorial quality and becomes instead lines of character stacked upon character: an emergent text. In an oscillating, fluid, and wholly inventive transformation, upon close scrutiny the image of the pagoda dissolves into text; when distance is established, it reemerges as picture.

With paintings of such elaborate and interconnected word and image forms, the audience must negotiate their viewing experience. Claude Gandelman offers interesting observations on the function of text within paintings: "Inscriptions can also be said to represent the 'performative' aspect of the work of art in the literal meaning of this word; that is they are used to direct the gaze of the observer to specific spots within the painting and are part of the manipulative strategy of the painter."<sup>71</sup> Working from the theories of J. L. Austin,<sup>72</sup> Gandelman

describes a form of kinetic subversion, meaning that the inscriptions cause a perlocutionary effect, which forces the viewer to perform some action or confront the paintings in a prescribed way.<sup>73</sup> Text in the jeweled pagoda mandalas is much more than inscription. It dominates picture in a new way, thereby requiring something different from the viewer. The particular production of the surface induces a performance on the part of the audience because seeing and reading the visual complexity of the textual image requires an exchange of vantage points. The bodily mechanics involved in experiencing the paintings manifest as delving into text and zooming out to pagoda and are enacted by the viewer's body.<sup>74</sup> As an *architextual* icon, the indivisibility of word and picture forces the viewer to both see the pictorial pagoda and non-synoptically read its textuality. This particular type of reading is born of a curiosity that acknowledges the presence of the text and apprehends the meaning of a few characters or lines, but does not reach a holistic comprehension.

However, the simultaneous vision of the whole of both is precluded by their very conflation. Seeing the whole of the reliquary requires a distance that excludes the ability to read the sūtra.<sup>75</sup> From the vantage point of several paces from the painting, the pagoda stands, nine floors complete with brackets and bells. Only in stepping closer and leaning in does the audience recognize that text is building the pagoda, at which point it is impossible to appraise the pagoda as a whole. This interchange of distance and proximity performed in viewing the paintings suggests a fluidity between seeing and reading. Through the performance of the viewer's body, the ability to fluctuate between the two realms eventually blurs the distinction of either. The performativity obliged by the mandalas engenders a rare viewing experience, although not completely unique. A comparable viewing experience is the miraculous presence of the Buddha and optical illusionism in the legendary Shadow Cave. According to the lore, Śākyamuni entered

the grotto home of a subdued dragon king and leapt into the cave's wall while continuing to project his image. However, because "only those who looked from afar could see him, for close by he was invisible,"<sup>76</sup> seeing the shadow depicted in Chinese murals required a bodily negotiation between the material surface of the painting and the illusionistic depth engendered only by distance. Thus, similar openings and closings of space are encouraged.

While reading even a brief portion of the jeweled pagoda mandala's text is optional, the requirements resulting from that choice are not. Subtler movements are obligatory; heads tilt sharply from right to left while attempting to read sections of the text in which the axis flips horizontally, as occurs in all horizontal supporting beams, portions of the platform and railings, and other architectural details. The text itself cannot be reoriented and read, so the viewer must renegotiate their position before the painting. Even after establishing a closeness to the painting, the tiny text might still invite the urge to squint in hopes of sharpening the lines of the characters and summoning forth greater legibility. From this intimate perspective, the viewer might mouth the words while reading a line of text, thus acknowledging the interior voice marking the orality ever-present in text's materiality.<sup>77</sup> Given the bodily demands, reading as such would have been limited. The painting's very format provokes these subconscious and conscious bodily performances on the part of the viewer. In this way, the macro and micro motions transcend mere movement. While they are innately flexible and accommodate an individualized approach unbound by a specific sequence, the movements are nonetheless the result of the surface's perlocutionary effect, marking it a performance.

Two perplexing juxtapositions operate at the heart of this transcription style. The first is the *alegibility* of textual characters. Despite being clearly written, the characters are persistently challenging to read for two main reasons. First, the viewer's physical distance from the painting

obscures the textuality of the pagoda: distance elides distinction. The second reason is that it is a necessary outgrowth of the format. As demonstrated in the section diagraming the chronology of the text as it builds the pagoda, the unpredictability of a sequence that jumps around to unconnected parts of the architecture prevents any easy or direct reading. Characters flip their axes of alignment, hang from roof eaves, and jump over large areas so that the sūtra text can be formed into a complicated shape. Combined with the minuteness of the characters themselves and regardless of how discernable the individual characters may be upon close scrutiny, this basic feature makes the scripture exceedingly difficult to read.

The second, elegant juxtaposition is that in the jeweled pagoda mandalas, the invisible constructs the visible. The *alegibility* of the text is a necessary condition for the visual gestalt to resolve. The vision of the pagoda depends on the invisibility of the very properties of text that we associate with its function as an object to be read: mainly, the legibility of words and their amenability to semantic interpretation. This erasure of function is the very creative force that erects the reliquary. The text rendered invisible from a distance manifests not only a vision of a pagoda, but a highly legible and architecturally accurate reliquary composed of *alegible* script. Indeed, the text itself remains inaccessible in its projection of the pagoda, while the pagoda is conversely more accessible than most architecturally constructed versions: the doors are open, affording rare access to an interior sanctum complete with two corporeally rendered Buddhas. Only one, pagoda or sūtra, fully manifests in a single moment, but the blending of the two summons contemplations of indivisibility.

The juxtaposition of the invisible rendering the visible is further complicated by the fact that it represents another role reversal of the conventional functions and expectations surrounding relics and reliquaries. Where once reliquary contained relic, guarding and hiding it

from sight, it is only through the activation of relic as sūtra transcription that the structure that once housed it is revealed, thereby conflating the two. The design's deeper significance lies in the act of viewing performed by the audience. Within the paintings exists a precarious balance of *alegible* and accessible, of invisible and visible, of exclusive and inclusive distance—and the combination of these defining characteristics are the singular hallmark of the jeweled pagoda mandalas.

### **Indivisibility**

The jeweled pagoda mandalas, although the product of elaborate commissions requiring great skill, time, and resources, were nonetheless augmented sūtra transcription projects in both function and intention. The mandalas served little documented ritualistic function, were likely never the main icon of veneration for long, and were probably displayed infrequently. However, despite this lack of secure ritualistic function, the mandalas like many other copying projects were embedded in a system of meaning where the semiotic expression of sacred word carried its own contextually specific connotations and the visual combinations of text and image manifested different Buddhist philosophies.

The transcription of sacred text was a ubiquitous practice in the premodern period. It was also an amalgamated one, in which the copying of sūtra was often not the sole pursuit. Devotees frequently paired sūtras with pagodas in a variety of ways.<sup>78</sup> In this context, the jeweled pagoda mandalas embody a particularly creative format of sūtra transcription: their central icon carries meaning and marks a new iteration in the long history of the combination of sūtra and pagoda in visual culture, religious practice, and doctrine.<sup>79</sup> As many scholars have discussed, the desire to combine sūtras and pagodas in one project likely stemmed in great part from the benefits derived

from the conflation of the two highly meritorious forms of devotion. Sūtras commanded copying and promised great rewards for doing so. Komatsu Shigemi calculates that the *Lotus Sūtra* accounts for approximately ninety percent of all surviving scriptures from the Heian period.<sup>80</sup> This owes in part to the several instances within the sūtra that instruct devotees to copy its text and disseminate the dharma, resulting in abundance for the practitioner:

[I]f a good man or good woman shall receive and keep, read and recite, explain, or copy in writing a single phrase of the *Scripture of the Dharma Blossom*, or otherwise and in a variety of ways make offerings to the scriptural roll with flower perfume, necklaces, powdered incense, perfumed paste, burned incense, silk banners and canopies, garments, or music or join palms in reverent worship, that person is to be looked up to and exalted by all the worlds, showered with offerings fit for a Thus Come One [a Buddha].<sup>81</sup>

Hence, the redemptive power of the *Lotus Sūtra* is so great that to copy or intone even one phrase is to gain the status of the Buddha. Ishida Mosaku explains that four merit-generating methods have characterized Buddhism: making banners, constructing pagodas, copying scriptures, and carving sculptures.<sup>82</sup> Ishida notes that from the Heian period (794-1185) on, attempts were made to combine some of the four types of activities in one project: banners with the image of a Buddha, sūtras placed within sculptures, sūtra copies of alternating lines of script and images of Buddhas, and pagoda-sūtras.<sup>83</sup> The merit is thus doubled and with only marginal effort and expense expended compared to the commission of individual projects. Building off Ishida, Miya Tsugio claims that the jeweled pagoda mandalas manifest the meritorious activities of building pagodas, copying sūtras, and interpretation of the dharma.<sup>84</sup>

While not alone in their combination of text and reliquary, the jeweled pagoda mandalas represent a striking solution in obeying the command to construct pagodas and copy sūtras. Not only do the mandalas fulfill the injunction to honor, revere, and copy the scriptures, thereby reaping considerable salvific benefit; they also respect the injunction to erect pagodas. This perhaps embodies a more economical fulfillment of the order to erect architectural reliquaries—not always a financially feasible option. The *Lotus Sūtra* is celebrated for its unifying perspective on both the cult of the pagoda and the cult of the book and, as it is the most commonly used sūtra in the jeweled pagoda mandalas format, this rather equitable confirmation of both devotional practices probably did not go unnoticed. At multiple points the sūtra proclaims the transcendent value of both devotional activities, comparing the merit and rewards so generated and suggesting a nondual parallel between the two.<sup>85</sup> Therefore, we can understand the mandalas as the visual manifestation of the conflation of the cult of relics and the cult of the book. They thus reflect a merging of devotional practices on the painted surface that mirrored the blended religious practices of premodern Japan.

But explanations for the central reliquary of the jeweled pagoda mandalas have yet to venture beyond the conclusion that the mandalas are yet another incarnation of this long tradition of combinatory practice based on the merit of both constructing pagodas and copying sūtras in one unified project. While this is certainly a sound and secure interpretation, I believe that the mandalas embody more than the search for the combination of multiple merits in one manifestation. The mandalas are undoubtedly a transcription project; and yet, they are more than that. They exceed conventional transcriptions because of the novel twist of a written pagoda and the inclusion of multiple narrative episodes, rather than the single vignette of typical frontispieces. Most significant, the format of the jeweled pagoda mandalas is both the conveyor



of meaning and the meaning itself. Exploring the site of this collusion uncovers Buddhist depths revealed only by an analysis of the interaction of the two media merged to create a new textual image that is neither strictly word nor purely picture.

Sūtra text as relic originates in the conflation of the Buddha with the dharma or his teachings, becoming known as the *dharmakāya* (dharma body; 法身 Jpn. hōshin, Ch. fashen).<sup>86</sup> Even in early texts we find evidence of the nonduality of the Buddha and the dharma.<sup>87</sup> Particularly relevant to the study at hand are the characterizations by the *Lotus Sūtra* of the equivalence of the Buddha and his teachings.

O Medicine King! Wherever it may be preached, or read, or recited, or written, or whatever place a roll of this scripture may occupy, in all those places one is to erect a stūpa of the seven jewels, building it high and wide with impressive decoration. There is no need even to lodge śarīra in it, what is the reason? Within it there is already a whole body of the Thus Come One.<sup>88</sup>

Again, the scripture equates the sūtra with the Buddha, saying, “If there is anyone who can hold [the *Lotus Sūtra*], / Then he holds the Buddha body”<sup>89</sup> and “if there is a man...who shall look with veneration on a roll of this scripture as if it were the Buddha himself...”<sup>90</sup> The nonduality of the sūtra and the body of the Buddha as scriptural text represents the ultimate conflation of dharma and relic, and thus constitutes the dharma relic category of relic veneration.

Pagodas are also embodied monuments. As John S. Strong has noted, the “apparent functional equivalence of stūpa and buddha” stems from the conviction that “a stūpa ‘is’ the living buddha.”<sup>91</sup> The corporealization of the stūpa/pagoda as another manifestation of the *dharmakāya* is a consistent theme across many texts and schools of Buddhism.<sup>92</sup> Particularly rich are the Esoteric Buddhist conflations of pagodas as the *dharmakāya* of the cosmic buddha,

Mahāvairocana (大日如來 Jpn. Dainichi, Ch. Dari Rulai).<sup>93</sup> Again, the *Lotus Sūtra* proves an important source for understanding the conceptual mechanics of the mandalas: in the chapter, “Apparition of the Jeweled Stūpa,” the Buddha instructs his disciple in the proper post-parinirvāṇa methods of veneration saying, “After my passage into extinction, anyone who wishes to make offerings to my whole body must erect a great stūpa.”<sup>94</sup>

The mechanism revealing the *architextual* icon in the jeweled pagoda mandalas is scriptural text. Yet because scripture is not just recorded teachings but actively partakes in the essence of the Buddha as a dharma relic, it is no mere signal.<sup>95</sup> The central image deconstructs to reveal body building body. Thus, the textual pagoda is more than a one-dimensional image of body; the central icon is an embodied projection of the somaticity of the Buddha composed of his relics. By closing the gap between reference and referent, the jeweled pagoda mandalas challenge the assumption that only partial signification is possible. This undifferentiated yoking of sūtra and pagoda provides the viewer with a visual path to contemplations of the multiplicity of Buddha bodies. It is through the macro movements of opening and closing the space between the viewer and the object encouraged by the perlocutionary effect of the surface that the viewer becomes a crucial part of the expressive creation of this somatic profusion. The viewer experientially constitutes the revealing and dissolving of the bodies into one. Ultimately, through this conflation the icon manifests an amalgamated form of the Buddha, including the anthropomorphic appearances of the Buddha seated within the pagoda. The paintings collapse distinction with indivisibility and the constant slippage of dharma into sūtra and sūtra into pagoda escapes rigid duality, and the concepts of body, relic, text, and reliquary are allowed to exist in a dynamic visual relationship. Rather than merely reinforcing what is already known,

these objects reveal the potential of visualization by mirroring the conceptual fluidity of these identities in an indivisible format.

In this way, the jeweled pagoda mandalas eschew the perceived gulf between word and image.<sup>96</sup> According to Michel Foucault, there exists an untraversable and eternal chasm separating the two. He believes written word and graphic image run parallel to one another, that what is expressed in writing cannot be given visual form while retaining the original meaning of the text. The same fractured communication exists when visual form is described by word. The divide prevents full expression of one by the other.<sup>97</sup> However, Foucault finds hope in calligrams (pictures composed of words), believing that they bring “a text and a shape as close together as possible” by simultaneously invoking and conflating written and visual modes of communication.<sup>98</sup> Foucault writes, “Pursuing its quarry by two paths, the calligram sets the most perfect trap. By its double function, it guarantees capture, as neither discourse alone nor a pure drawing could do.”<sup>99</sup> Yet embedded even within his optimistic analysis of the calligram’s abilities is the assumption of word and picture’s ontological divide. So while a Foucauldian lens can carry a reading of the jeweled pagoda mandalas further by focusing on the indivisibility of the media constructing the central icon, an analysis of these paintings need not accept such a break between text and image.

Rather than proceed from a presupposition of unbridgeable distance, the mandalas offer a dynamic bond between the two media that comes closer to a nondual relationship resulting from text's sacred ontology as relic, and even as world progenitor. Sūtra therefore constructs the pagoda and illustrates through indivisibility their fundamental unity as bodies of the Buddha. Through a Buddhist interpretation of the paintings, text and image are both icons of body that

depend upon one another in a visual conflation that challenges any reading which would attempt to divide them.

### **Text in Premodern Japan**

Having burrowed into the surface to explicate the connections between the indivisibility of word and picture and the performative viewing that manifests the simultaneous expressions of the *dharmakāya* of the Buddha, telescoping out from the jeweled pagoda mandalas to the cultural context of sacred word in premodern Japan allows us to understand how such an innovative composition came into existence. As demonstrated in the investigations of the role of written word in the central icon of the mandalas, text jettisons its discursive function. It ceases to be reading material, but in this regard, directly corresponds to the openness of sacred text in the early premodern period. Ultimately, it is by the ability of text to break hermeneutical strictures that enables written word to project an embodied icon.

The countless explications and manifestations of sacred word in art, literature, and poetry of premodern Japan suggest that scriptures are open texts capable of potentially endless re-creation and reinterpretation. They necessitate constant and pious re-construction, as claimed by Shingon monk and polymath, Kūkai (774-835). Ryūichi Abé explains: “Kūkai approaches the text as a yet-to-be bound—or, perhaps more appropriately, never-to-be bound—constantly reworked manuscript. For Kūkai, the text is not a book but a writing that remains open-ended.”<sup>100</sup> The centrality of text’s ritualistic performance within Japanese Buddhism is difficult to overemphasize. Indeed, early premodern Japan was penetrated by textuality. Whether through the Shingon insistence on the ritualistic performance of both esoteric and exoteric texts to unlock their meanings; the chanting of sūtra text or title widely popularized by Amidist, Lotus, and Pure

Land schools; the enshrining of sacred writings within icons for ritualistic vivification; the practice of sūtra burials; or the pious transcription of scripture;<sup>101</sup> the enactment of sacred texts was woven into the religious and social fabric of the age.

Various techniques of reading and chanting were employed to access the power of scripture. The particular technique of *tendoku* 轉讀, whose general meaning is the vocalization of the sūtra but usually refers to briefly chanting the title along with selected lines of scripture, certainly does not involve a sustained or deep engagement with the full text of the sūtra, yet remains incredibly potent.<sup>102</sup> The ritualistic handling of written sūtra known as *tenpon* 轉翻 is an active process which involves holding the text with both hands and moving it in a motion that mimics the flapping of a bird's wings three times to the right, three times to the left, and once more in front. This dynamic treatment usually occurs during chants of the sūtra.<sup>103</sup> These abbreviated techniques stand in great contrast to the actual reading of scripture for content, known as a "true reading" (真讀 *shindoku*). Flipping through a sacred text, albeit ritualistically, granted the participant great merit. Textual encounters—even fleeting or frivolous ones—had the ability to convey tremendous apotropaic and salvific power as well as to satisfy more earthly ambitions associated with the authoritative and social value of the texts.

One such example comes from the eighth-century *Miraculous Episodes of Good and Evil Karmic Effects in the Nation of Japan* (日本国現報善惡靈異記 *Nihonkoku genpō zen'aku ryōiki*) in which a devoted reciter of the *Heart Sūtra* and copier of other scriptures was summoned to the court of King Enma after her death (painlessly we are assured) so that she might chant sūtras before him, allowing him to witness and revel in the beauty of her celebrated voice. After three days, she is allowed to return to life. She then notices three men in yellow robes standing by the gate who explain to her that this encounter is not their first and that at the

Nara east market in three days time, they will meet again. It is at the market that the woman purchases two scrolls of the *Brahma Net Sūtra* and one scroll of the *Heart Sūtra* and afterward realizes that these scriptures are in fact her own copies made years before on yellow paper. Furthermore, she discovers the sūtras to be none other than the three men of yellow robes.<sup>104</sup>

Sūtra transcriptions like the mandalas represent a type of copying known as *kechienkyō* 結縁經 or sūtras that establish *kechien* 結縁, a karmically beneficial connection between the Buddha and the copyists and patrons. The earliest mention of the term *kechienkyō* comes from an entry in the diary of the Heian-period courtier, Fujiwara Sanesuke (957-1046), in the ninth month and tenth day of 1021.<sup>105</sup> The term occurs frequently after this point. For example, the *Hyakurenshō* records that on the fourth day of the third month in 1142, a ceremony utilizing a copy of the Buddhist canon was held at the Byōdōin in Uji in order to establish *kechien* for the benefit of Emperor Toba.<sup>106</sup> Fabio Rambelli notes that “texts were endowed with all the characteristics of sacred objects,” were “not essentially different from relics, icons, and talismans,”<sup>107</sup> and that “[a]s soteriological tools...[t]hey acquired a magical and mystical dimension as sorts of ‘relics’ of past masters (and ultimately, of the Buddha).”<sup>108</sup> Sūtras were not merely symbols of the Buddha’s presence; rather they were embodiments of the Buddha. Thus, the commissioning of transcriptions, the ornamentation of scriptures, the inclusion of bodily material,<sup>109</sup> and the labors of hand-copying all hoped to establish personal and lasting connections with the numinosity of the dharma. Kevin Carr recently articulated the concept of *iconarratives* in his study on the functions of Buddhist visual narratives. *Iconarratives* sacralize space and provide an outlet for the establishment of karmic connections between the iconized object and the audience.<sup>110</sup> Although the graphic vignettes in the jeweled pagoda mandalas create the option for visual reading, their presence does not necessarily mean that viewership was

always so targeted and interactive. The projection of the somatic multiplicity of the central pagoda and the visual narratives in the mandalas continue to generate karmic connective possibilities for audiences as an icon of the Buddha in word and picture.<sup>111</sup>

Insofar as the very materiality of texts is a signifier, ownership of written word carries great social and authoritative value. The ubiquitous practice of *shōgon* 莊嚴, or elaborate adornment of Buddhist ritual objects, stresses the importance of materiality.<sup>112</sup> Expensive and laborious commissions can signify a desire to manifest not only extreme piety but also wealth and social prestige. With the jeweled pagoda mandalas, beautifully dyed blue paper sets an exquisite background upon which golden characters erect the central icon. Narrative images of gold and silver—and bright reds, greens, blues, and yellows in the case of the Chūsonji set—surround the dharma reliquary. And of course the large size of the individual mandalas and the scale of the sets as a whole further augment the projects.

The various interpretations and variety of uses of Buddhist texts reflect their polysemic nature. They were valued for their performative qualities and for their material manifestation of the immaterial, the physical expression of which constituted various systems of value, from economic to symbolic and religious currency.<sup>113</sup> Understanding texts reductively only through their hermeneutic properties ignores the many dimensions of their lives. As this article has also suggested, texts create pluralities through diverse visual expression. As Richard Payne has noted, it is impossible to characterize Buddhism as employing just one view of language's potential.<sup>114</sup> It is the plurality and flexibility of sacred texts that make them distinctively suitable for artistic manipulation. Their visual manifestations not only reflect established meanings, but also create new interpretations of the signified and the nature and plurality of the written word. "[E]very

reading is always a rewriting;”<sup>115</sup> and every visual manifestation expounds and explores the possibilities of sacred text, opening up new perspectives through their very materiality.

That sacred scripture was not always meant to be consumed character by character testifies to the diverse functions and values of sacred text. The purpose of the jeweled pagoda mandalas was realized in part through the act of copying itself, engendering karmic, material, and social caché. Scriptures were valued for their materiality, their salvific, apotropaic, and prophylactic power, and indeed for their *sheer presence*, which enlivened such things as pagodas and sculptures regardless of their visibility. In the jeweled pagoda mandalas, text assumes roles beyond the borders of exegetical reading; their graphically copied scriptures expand our relationship to text and our interactive experiences, necessitating new ways of performative engagement. The sum of such scriptural incarnations is far greater than their constitutive parts. They offer a vision of indivisibility that surpasses doctrinal and ritual manifestations of sūtra and pagoda by performing both simultaneously and without ontological distinction and therein challenge the presupposed gap between word and image. They are visual treatises on the potentialities of text that challenge all restrictions placed on Buddhist scriptures. After all, text created the world.



## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> For instance, the *Flower Garland Sūtra* (Jpn. *Daihōkō butsu kegon kyō*; Ch. *Dafangguang fo huayan jing*; Skt. *Buddhāvataṃsaka mahāvaipulya sūtra*; 大方広仏華嚴經; Takakusu Junjirō and Watanabe Kaigyoku, ed., *Taishō daizōkyō* (Tokyo: Taishō Issaikyō Kankōkai, 1924-32) no. 278, 9: 395a4-788b9; hereafter abbreviated as *T.*) visualizes the universe textually. See Luis O. Gómez, "The Whole Universe as a Sūtra," in *Buddhism in Practice*, ed. Donald S. Lopez (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 107-112. This radical concept of language as originating in the *dharmakāya* (formless dharma body of the Buddha) institutes a vision of the world as textual conflation: everything is text, and thus text constructs everything and is the root of all things. There exists nothing that is not encapsulated by sacred text, nothing that does not issue forth from it, for differentiation is a matter of semiotic articulation and signification (差別

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*shabetsu*). The *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* (Jpn. *Dainichi kyō*; Ch. *Dari jing*; 大日經; T. no. 848, 18: 1a4-55a4) is also used to cast the world as text. See Ryūichi Abé, *The Weaving of Mantra: Kūkai and the Construction of Esoteric Buddhist Discourse* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 275-300. For more on the topic of *ajikan* 阿字觀 (A-syllable contemplation in Tendai and Shingon schools of Buddhism), see Cynthia J. Bogel, *With a Single Glance: Buddhist Icon and Early Mikkyō Vision* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2009), 199-200; Richard K. Payne, “*Ajikan*: Ritual and Meditation in the Shingon Tradition,” in *Re-Visioning “Kamakura” Buddhism*, ed. Richard K. Payne (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1998), 219-48; and Pamela D. Winfield, *Icons and Iconoclasm in Japanese Buddhism: Kūkai and Dōgen on the Art of Enlightenment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 81-84.

<sup>2</sup> At the time of the jeweled pagoda mandalas production, the relationship between the Kansai region and Hiraizumi was a complicated one. Rather than the wholesale adoption of the Kansai trappings of culture and legitimacy resulting in the jettisoning of Emishi culture, the Ōshū Fujiwara transformed Hiraizumi while maintaining traditions and symbols important to their northern heritage. See Mimi Hall Yiengpruksawan, *Hiraizumi: Buddhist Art and Regional Politics in Twelfth-Century Japan* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 1998).

<sup>3</sup> Two of the lone mandalas appear to have been originally part of the same set, and based on stylistic analysis were likely commissioned during the late eleventh or early twelfth century. One of the mandalas is currently in a private collection, while the other is owned by the temple Jōshinji in Shiga prefecture. For an image of the mandala in a private collection, see Izumi Takeo, “Hokekyō hōtō mandara,” *Kokka* 1169 (1993): 29. For an image of the Jōshinji mandala, see Kyoto National Museum, ed., *Ōchō no butsuga to girei: zen o tsukushi bi o tsukusu* (Kyoto: Kyoto National Museum, 1998), 343. The third lone mandala, likely produced in the late twelfth

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century, is now in the temple collection of Myōhōji in the city of Sakai. For an image, see Miya Tsugio, “Myōhōjizō myōhōrengekyō kinji hōtō mandara ni tsuite,” *Bijutsu kenkyū* 337 (1987): 88-96.

<sup>4</sup> Jpn. Myōhō renga kyō; Ch. *Miaofa lianhua jing*; Skt. *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka sūtra*; 妙法蓮華經; *T. no. 262, 9: 1c15-62b1*.

<sup>5</sup> Jpn. *Konkōmyō saishō kyō*; Ch. *Jinguangming zuisheng wang jing*; Skt.

*Suvarṇaprabhāsottama rāja sūtra*; 金光明最勝王經; *T. no. 665, 16: 403a04-456c25*.

<sup>6</sup> Jpn. *Hannya haramita shingyō*; Ch. *Bore boluomiduo xinjing*; Skt. *Prajñāpāramitā hṛdaya sūtra*; 般若波羅蜜多心經; *T. no. 251, 8: 848c5-23*. For an image of the oldest example, see Miya Tsugio, *Kinji hōtō mandara* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1976), 4. The description of the image from Lionel Giles reads, “—佛說 [sermon of the Buddha; Ch. *foshuo*] prefixed to title. Written in a fanciful shape, and with dotted red lines joining the characters so as to present the outline of a pagoda. Mounted as a kakemono scroll. 22 cm x 1½ ft. S.5410.” See Lionel Giles, *Descriptive Catalogue of the Chinese Manuscripts from Tunhuang in the British Museum* (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1957), 35 entry 1470.

<sup>7</sup> Miya, *Kinji hōtō mandara*. Before the publication of his book, Miya wrote a few articles introducing his ideas, which were later incorporated into the monograph.

<sup>8</sup> Willa J. Tanabe, *Paintings of the Lotus Sutra* (New York, Tokyo: Weatherhill, 1988), 98-108.

<sup>9</sup> For more on transformation tableaux, see Victor Mair, *T'ang Transformation Texts: A Study of the Buddhist contribution to the Rise of Vernacular Fiction and Drama in China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989); Tanabe, *Paintings of the Lotus Sutra*; Elizabeth ten Grotenhuis, *Japanese Mandalas: Representations of Sacred Geography* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i

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Press, 1999); Eugene Wang, *Shaping the Lotus Sutra: Buddhist Visual Culture in Medieval China* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2005); and Wu Hung, “What is *Bianxiang*?—On the Relationship between Dunhuang Art and Dunhuang Literature,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 52, no. 1 (1992): 111-92.

<sup>10</sup> Yiengpruksawan, *Hiraizumi*, 161-84.

<sup>11</sup> For more studies on the jeweled pagoda mandalas, see Ishida Mosaku, “Kokuhō saishōōkyō kyōtō mandara,” in *Chūsonji Ōkagami*, 3 vols. (Tokyo: Ōtsuka Kōgeisha, 1941), vol. 2, 4-13; Kameda Tsutomu, “Jūbun saishōōkyō jikkai hōtō mandara,” in *Chūsonji*, ed. Ishida Mosaku (Tokyo: Asahi Shinbunsha, 1959), 68; Hamada Takashi, “Konkōmyōsaishōōkyō kinji hōtō mandara zu,” in *Chūsonji*, ed. Fujishima Gaijirō (Tokyo: Kawade Shobō Shinsha, 1971), 145-52, 261-65; Ariga Yoshitaka, “Konkōmyō saishōō kyō zu saikō,” *Chūsonji bukkyō bunka kenkyūjo ronshū* 1 (1997): 92-99; Hayashi On, “Daichōjuinzō konkōmyōsaishōōkyō kinji hōtō mandara zu oboegaki,” *Bukkyō geijutsu* 277 (2004): 81-95; Miya, “Myōhōjizō myōhōrengēkyō kinji hōtō mandara ni tsuite,” 88-96; Izumi, “Hokekyō hōtō mandara,” 29-38. I have also provided a more extended analysis of this literature. See Halle O’Neal, “Written Stūpa, Painted Sūtra: Relationships of Text and Image in the Construction of Meaning in the Japanese Jeweled-Stūpa Mandalas” (PhD diss., University of Kansas, 2011), 7-13.

<sup>12</sup> For a photo of one of the inscriptions, see Miya, *Kinji hōtō mandara*, 90.

<sup>13</sup> For a careful analysis of the compositional and painting styles as they pertain to dating, see *Ibid.*, 115-16.

<sup>14</sup> Kunkai, *Hōryūji zō son’ei-bon taishi den gyokurin shō*, 3 vols. (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1978), vol. 3, 456. Miya, *Kinji hōtō mandara*, 90.

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<sup>15</sup> Ogino Minahiko, “‘Hōryūji shariden hōmotsu chūmon’ narabi ni, ‘Hōryūji gomadō honzon tō mokuroku’ ryakkai,” *Bijutsu kenkyū* 34 (1934): 35, 37.

<sup>16</sup> For the complete inscriptions on the new boxes, see Nakao Takashi, “Kyōto Ryūhonji no Hokekyō shakyō,” *Risshō daigaku bungakubu kenkyū kiyō* 16 (2000): 5.

<sup>17</sup> Tanzan Shrine, originally a temple dedicated to Fujiwara Kamatari (614-69), was built in the late seventh century in Sakurai, Nara. For an introduction to the shrine, see Nara National Museum, ed., *Tanzan jinja no meihō: yamato no kamigami to bijutsu* (Nara: Nara National Museum, 2004).

<sup>18</sup> Jpn. *Muryōgi kyō*; Ch. *Wuliangyi jing*; Skt. *Amitārtha sūtra*; 無量義經; *T.* no. 276, 9: 383b15-389b22.

<sup>19</sup> Jpn. *Kan Fugen bosatsu gyōhō kyō*; Ch. *Guan puxian pusa xingfa jing*; 觀普賢菩薩行法經; *T.* no. 277, 9: 389b26-394b11.

<sup>20</sup> See Miya, *Kinji hōtō mandara*, 86 n1 for the inscription.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> For a thorough analysis, see Miya, *Kinji hōtō mandara*, 81-85

<sup>24</sup> For a transcription of the inscription, see *Ibid.*, 86 n1. As Miya Tsugio points out, the term ‘lotus mandala’ carries connotations unrelated to the Tanzan Shrine mandalas. By examining several premodern texts, he determines two broad categories of lotus mandalas. The more schematically arranged lotus mandala associated with esoteric Buddhism (密教 Jpn. *mikkyō*, Ch. *mijiao*) and often used in the *Lotus Sūtra* rites (法華經法 *hokekyōhō*) frequently features Śākyamuni and Prabhūtaratna sitting side-by-side within a jeweled pagoda framed by an eight-

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petal lotus, a reference to the eleventh chapter of the *Lotus Sūtra*, the “Apparition of the Jeweled Pagoda.” The other category is the narrativization of the twenty-eight chapters of the *Lotus Sūtra* (法華經二十八品大意絵 *Hokekyō nijūhachi bon daiie*, often shortened to 大意絵 *daiie*).

However, if the historical entry is sufficiently ambiguous, as often they are, then it becomes difficult to ascertain whether the ‘lotus mandala’ in the passage refers to the esotericized version or the transformation tableaux-type; certainty is possible only if the mandala is described visually, or if the full categorical title is used for the paintings of the twenty-eight chapters. *Ibid.*, 39-42.

<sup>25</sup> Kuroita Katsumi, ed., “Bunji no chūmon,” in *Azuma kagami*, in *Shintei zōho, kokushi taikēi*, 58 vols. (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1929-64), vol. 32, 352-55.

<sup>26</sup> Hamada, “Konkōmyōsaishōōkyō kinji hōtō mandara zu,” 264.

<sup>27</sup> The controversial text known as the “Chūsonji rakkei kuyō ganmon 中尊寺落慶供養願文” mentions the commission of a blue paper Buddhist canon with alternating lines of gold and silver script, which is a reference to the vast scriptural project of Kiyohira. Hiraizumi Chōshi Hensan Inka, ed., “Chūsonji rakkei kuyō ganmon,” in *Hiraizumi chōshi* 平泉町史, 3 vols. (Tokyo: Zoku Gunsho Ruijū Kanseikai, 1985), vol. 1, 59-61. For a discussion of the technique of this very unusual style of sūtra transcription, see Sasaki Hōsei, “Kingin kōsho no tejun to kōfu,” in *Kenrantaru kyōten*, ed. Sato Shinji (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1983), 132-34.

<sup>28</sup> For example, Kiyohira’s son, Fujiwara Motohira (1105-57), and grandson, Fujiwara Hidehira (1122-1187), continued the practice of elaborate sūtra transcription. Motohira commissioned a set of ornate *Lotus Sūtra* scrolls, and Hidehira followed the tradition of his grandfather and ordered a blue and gold Buddhist canon. For more on the artistic commissions of Motohira and Hidehira, see Yiengpruksawan, *Hiraizumi*, 89-120.

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 174 and Miya, *Kinji hōtō mandara*, 33 and 122. Miya also entertains the possibility of Motohira as patron.

<sup>30</sup> Significant passages are dedicated to extolling the Four Guardian Kings' (四天王 Jpn. *shitennō*, Ch. *sitianwang*; Skt. *catur mahā rājakāyikāḥ*) and other tutelary deities' protection for those who hold and keep the sūtra; specifically, the twelfth chapter of Yijing's translation of the sūtra, *The Protection of the Nation by the Four Guardian Kings*, details the vast rewards offered to those—and in particular, kings and monks—who revere the sūtra. The chapter begins with the promise of protection from encroaching enemies, freedom from sundry afflictions, and salvation from the bitterness of famine and epidemics for those who follow the *Golden Light Sūtra* (*T. no. 665, 16: 427c1-6*). The Four Guardian Kings swear an oath to smite and subdue oppressors and to destroy evil and disease by the great power and authority bestowed upon them as defenders of the righteous followers of the scripture (*T. no. 665, 16: 427c9-28*). The promises of such sought-after blessings often focus on the eradication of enemies, devoting long passages of strong rhetoric detailing the utter annihilation of adversaries and their lands (*T. no. 665, 16: 427c20-7*).

<sup>31</sup> Hamada, “Konkōmyōsaishōōkyō kinji hōtō mandara zu,” 265. Hamada provides a transcription of the early eighteenth-century record in footnote five.

<sup>32</sup> Hamada characterizes the ‘ten worlds (十界 *jikkai*)’ of the title as a reference to the ten levels of the mandalas’ pagoda—including the first story’s false or pent roof. Ibid., 265. Kameda Tsutomu advances a similar argument, explaining that the nine floors plus the pent roof, collectively called *jūkai* 十階 or ten stories, came to be known as *jikkai* 十界, a phrase he notes is completely unrelated to the *Golden Light Sūtra*. Kameda, “Jūbun saishōōkyō jikkai hōtō mandara,” 68. Presumably the homonymic quality of the words is responsible for the transference. However, neither author provides support for this supposition; and, given the lack

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of textual records for the jeweled pagoda mandalas, perhaps it is equally as possible to suggest that the ‘ten worlds’ refers to the ten scrolls of the set, rather than to the ten stories of the pagoda, which is itself an inaccurate count. Takahashi Tomio also finds this particular explanation weak and suggests instead that *jikkai* 十界 refers to the number of scrolls, culminating in a statement about the transformation of all things into the lands of the Buddha: one scroll, one pagoda, one world, and thus ten scrolls, ten pagodas, and the worlds of the ten directions (十方世界 Jpn. *jippō sekai*, Ch. *shifang shijie*; Skt. *daśa dig loka dhātu*), symbolizing the infinite expanse and all-encompassing nature of the Buddha-realm. Takahashi Tomio, “Chūsonji to hokekyō: Chūsonji konryū no kokoro,” *Tōhoku daigaku kyōyōbu kiyō* 33 (1981): 39.

<sup>33</sup> The Sanskrit word *maṇḍala* was transliterated into the Chinese term *mantuluo* and the Japanese term *mandara*. The term connotes the essence of enlightenment and is often spatially connected to the location of the Buddha’s spiritual awakening. Esoteric mandalas typically configure deities according to geometric schemata that render a cosmological map of the realms. However, in Japan the term expanded to include a variety of artistic depictions, such as visualizations of sanctified spaces like those of the Pure Land paradises and Shintō *kami* and their shrines. The term is also applied to images that portray tales from the scriptures. For thorough treatments of Japanese mandalas, see Ishida Hisatoyo, *Mandara no kenkyū*, 2 vols. (Tokyo: Tōkyō Bijutsu, 1975) and ten Grotenhuis, *Japanese Mandalas*.

<sup>34</sup> ten Grotenhuis, *Japanese Mandalas*, 2.

<sup>35</sup> For an etymological analysis, see “pagoda, n.,” OED Online, (accessed June 7, 2014). The term does not appear in the 1603 Japanese-Portuguese dictionary, *Vocabulario da lingua de Iapam*, compiled by Jesuits in Nagasaki. For a reproduction of the Bodleian Library copy, see



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Iwanami Shōten, ed., *Nippo Jisho, Vocabulario da lingoa de Iapam* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shōten, 1960).

<sup>36</sup> Stūpa has been used as an umbrella term for all Buddhist reliquaries of which there is a great variety. Xuanzang (602-664), a Chinese Buddhist monk whose travels in India were recorded in the *Great Tang Records on the Western Regions* (*Da Tang Xiyuji* 大唐西域記), advocated for this terminological unification. He declared the Chinese term for stūpa, *sudubo* 卒塔婆 (Jpn. *sotōba*), to be the accurate term for the architectural reliquaries he encountered. I would like to thank Tracy Miller for pointing this out in her talk, “Perfecting the Mountain: On the Morphology of Towering Temples in East Asia,” for the *Seniors Academics Forum on Ancient Chinese Architectural History* (December 7-8, 2013) at Kinki University, Osaka. For Xuanzang’s passage, see *T.* no. 2087, 51: 872a23-25. For a concise yet thorough summary of the historical origins of stūpas and its etymological derivation, see Kevin Trainor, *Relics, Ritual, and Representation in Buddhism: Rematerializing the Sri Lankan Theravāda Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 32-39.

<sup>37</sup> Excluding minor differences, the structure of transcription is markedly consistent across all the examples.

<sup>38</sup> For a complete map of the pagoda’s composition from sacred characters, refer to the associated digital project that animates the sequential construction. This marks the first time the complete sequence of the textual pagoda has been diagrammed and disseminated. See the Digital Projects tab at [www.halleoneal.com](http://www.halleoneal.com). Ishida Mosaku gave an important but cursory diagram of the Chūsonji transcription. See Ishida, “Kokuhō saishōōkyō kyōtō mandara,” 5.

<sup>39</sup> For more on the origins of the jeweled pagoda mandala format, see Miya, *Kinji Kinji hōtō mandara*, 1-9 and Halle O’Neal, “Continental Origins and Culture of Copying: An Examination

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of the Prototypes and Textualized Community of the Japanese Jeweled-Stūpa Mandalas,”

*Journal of Oriental Studies* 22 (2012): 112-32.

<sup>40</sup> The differences between the choice of narratives represented in the Ryūhonji and Tanzan Shrine sets are likely the result of differing stylistic models. The Tanzan Shrine version adheres to earlier styles of visual narratives in which a larger selection of vignettes are depicted, while the Ryūhonji set more closely matches the thirteenth century’s predilection for a reduced palette of scenes. See Miya, *Kinji Kinji hōtō mandara*, 120-48. This is not to suggest that an argument could not be made for variations in doctrinal interpretations within the two sets; however, this is beyond the scope of the current study.

<sup>41</sup> This is evident given the different handwritings seen within the sets.

<sup>42</sup> Miya, *Kinji Kinji hōtō mandara*, 91. For a transcription of the verse used, see *Ibid.*, 117 n6.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 91.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> For a discussion on the nebulous origins of the standardized seventeen-character line, see Tanaka Kaidō, *Shakyō nyūmon* (Osaka: Sōgensha, 1971), 52-56.

<sup>46</sup> In the case of the jeweled pagoda mandalas, the characters follow sūtra-script style. I appreciate Amy McNair sharing her calligraphic expertise with me through repeated email exchanges in which she patiently entertained my many questions.

<sup>47</sup> Miya, *Kinji hōtō mandara*, 119 and Hamada, “Konkōmyōsaishōōkyō kinji hōtō mandara zu,” 262.

<sup>48</sup> For instance, Ishida argues that Fujiwara Hidehira brushed the pagodas of the Chūsonji mandalas. See Ishida, “Kokuhō saishōōkyō kyōtō mandara,” 4.

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<sup>49</sup> Yamanaka Yutaka, trans., *Eiga monogatari*, 3 vols. (Tokyo: Shōgakkan, 1995-98), vol. 2, 233-34. William H. and Helen Craig McCullough, trans., *A Tale of Flowering Fortunes: Annals of Japanese Aristocratic Life in the Heian Period*, 2 vols. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1980), vol. 2, 530-35.

<sup>50</sup> First coined by Julia Kristeva to describe the interrelated nature of texts that refer in myriad ways to a multitude of other texts, intertextuality has taken on a life of its own and can be applied to studies beyond the textual. In *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault presents the idea succinctly: “The frontiers of a book are never clear-cut: beyond the title, the first lines and the last full stop, beyond its internal configuration and its autonomous form, it is caught up in a system of references to other books, other texts, other sentences: it is a node within a network...The book is not simply the object that one holds in one’s hands; it cannot remain within the little parallelepiped that contains it: its unity is variable and relative.” Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (London: Tavistock Publications, 1972), 23.

<sup>51</sup> For a discussion on the memorization of scripture, see Charlotte Eubanks, *Miracles of Book and Body: Buddhist Textual Culture & Medieval Japan* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2011), 133-72.

<sup>52</sup> I would like to thank Sylvan Barnet and the late William Burto for their kind hospitality and inexhaustible expertise during my trips to view their collection and Elizabeth ten Grotenhuis for making it possible.

<sup>53</sup> Komatsu Shigemi, “Hokekyō sasshi ni tsuite,” *Museum* 81 (1957): 7.

<sup>54</sup> As Akiyama Terukazu notes, Komatsu Shigemi suggests that the identity of the nun, sadly obscured by damage to the scroll, could be Goshirakawa’s consort, Takashina Eishi (d. 1216),

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the Lady of the Tango Chamber. See Komatsu Shigemi, “Menashikyō to sono shūhen,” *Museum* 60 (1956): 24-26. Akiyama also proposes that the Lady Kii could be the mystery woman due to her strong connections with the monks associated with the scroll’s production and ownership and because she is referred to as “Kii the nun” in some documents. See Akiyama Terukazu, “Women Painters at the Heian Court,” trans. Maribeth Graybill, in *Flowering in the Shadows: Women in the History of Chinese and Japanese Painting*, ed. Marsha Weidner (University of Hawai’i Press, 1990), 167-70.

<sup>55</sup> Komatsu Shigemi, *Heike nōkyō no kenkyū*, 3 vols. (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1976), vol. 2, 819-29. For more on the interpretative readings of the *ashide* in this scroll, see Julia Meech-Pekarik, “Disguised Scripts and Hidden Poems in an Illustrated Heian Sutra: Ashide and Uta-e in the Heike Nōgyō,” *Archives of Asian Art* 31 (1977): 52-78 and Eubanks, *Miracles of Book and Body*, 167-171. Illustrations of the scroll can be found in these publications.

<sup>56</sup> Examples of other empowered inscriptions are the paintings known as *myōgō honzon* 名号本尊 (the name of a Buddha or a powerful verse that is treated as an icon) and *kōmyō honzon* 光明本尊 (sacred light inscriptions).

<sup>57</sup> For more information on Nichiren, see Jacqueline I. Stone, *Original Enlightenment and the Transformation of Medieval Japanese Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1999), 239-356.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 261.

<sup>59</sup> Jacqueline I. Stone, “‘Not Mere Written Words’: Perspectives on the Language of the *Lotus Sūtra* in Medieval Japan,” in *Discourse and Ideology in Medieval Japanese Buddhism*, eds. Richard R. Payne and Taigen Dan Leighton (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 160.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 241.

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<sup>61</sup> Jacqueline Stone, “Chanting the August Title of the *Lotus Sutra*: *Daimoku* Practices in Classical and Medieval Japan,” in *Re-Visioning “Kamakura” Buddhism*, ed. Richard Karl Payne (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1998), 152.

<sup>62</sup> Esoteric mandalas composed of *Siddham*-style letters (*Bonji mandara* 梵字曼陀羅) are works of important text-image interactions representing the issue of embodiment bound up with language’s potential. However, it is outside the scope of this present study because of the differences in the linguistic systems.

<sup>63</sup> For Willa Tanabe’s discussion on this subject, see Tanabe, *Paintings of the Lotus Sutra*, 98-108.

<sup>64</sup> Miya Tsugio makes a similar observation. See Miya, *Kinji hōtō mandara*, 122.

<sup>65</sup> Leon Hurvitz, trans., *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom of the Fine Dharma* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 270. *T.* no. 262, 9: 53b4-5. Encouragement for one to commit aut cremation can also be found in Chinese texts, such as the *Fanwang jing* (*The Brahma Net Sūtra*). For more on the subject, see James A. Benn, *Burning for the Buddha: Self-Immolation in Chinese Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2007) and Jeremy Yu, *Sanctity and Self-Inflicted Violence in Chinese Religions, 1500-1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2012).

<sup>66</sup> Hurvitz, *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom of the Fine Dharma*, 272. *T.* no. 262, 9: 53c14-5.

<sup>67</sup> For more information on the gift of the body, see Reiko Ohnuma, *Head, Eyes, Flesh, and Blood: Giving Away the Body in Indian Buddhist Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).

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<sup>68</sup> Very rarely, the copyists omitted phrases. These are most likely mistakes rather than intentional omissions as transcription accuracy was paramount and the deletion of those phrases does not form new meanings.

<sup>69</sup> Mimi Hall Yiengpruksawan, “Illuminating the Illuminator: Notes on a Votive Transcription of the *Supreme Scripture of Golden Light* (*Konkōmyō saishō ōkyō*),” *Versus* 83/84 (1999): 116.

<sup>70</sup> The average size across the Ryūhonji set is 111cm x 58cm. The Tanzan Shrine and Chūsonji versions are roughly similar.

<sup>71</sup> Claude Gandelman, “By Way of Introduction: Inscriptions as Subversion,” *Visible Language* 23, no. 2/3 (1989): 140.

<sup>72</sup> J. L. Austin proposes the concepts of locutionary act, illocutionary act, and perlocutionary act. J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976).

<sup>73</sup> Gandelman, “By Way of Introduction,” 146. For Austin’s discussion on perlocutionary acts, see in particular *Ibid.*, 109-32.

<sup>74</sup> When viewing the paintings on display, I routinely saw people step close and squint in a physical attempt to see the miniscule text and then step back to see the pagoda. This bodily engagement was repeated multiple times.

<sup>75</sup> In his analysis of “Duck/Rabbit,” Ernst Gombrich explores issues of perception and the fundamental interdependence of shape and interpretation. Gombrich suggests that as viewers we are incapable of a pure seeing without the application of intellect, and in this way, whether one sees the text or the architectural reliquary in the jeweled pagoda mandalas is perhaps a matter of attention. Ernst Gombrich, *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 4-6.

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<sup>76</sup> This quote from the *Sea Sūtra* (Jpn. *Kanbutsu sanmai kaikyō*; Ch. *Guanfo sanmei haijing*; Skt. *Buddha dhyāna samādhi sāgara sūtra*; 觀佛三昧海經; *T. no. 643, 15: 645c4-697a10*) is a translation by Eugene Wang. See, Wang, *Shaping the Lotus Sutra*, 246. For more on the artist response to the Shadow Cave, see *Ibid.*, 245-55.

<sup>77</sup> Rather than understand the material and oral expression of signs as two genres without overlap, Ruth Finnegan suggests that written and oral manifestations are not rigid categories, but are often genres with permeable borders. Ruth Finnegan, *Oral Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 16-24.

<sup>78</sup> Some of the earliest descriptions of this pairing come from intrepid Chinese monks. Both Faxian (337–c.422) and Xuanzang bear witness in their travel diaries to the practice of dharma relic stūpas. In the text, *Record of Buddhist Countries* (佛國記 Jpn. *Bukkoku ki*, Ch. *Foguoji*), Faxian records in his visit to India during 399-414 that stūpas were constructed for the specific purpose of sūtra veneration, creating sutra-stūpas (經塔 Jpn. *kyōtō*, Ch. *jingta*). *T. no. 2085, 51: 859b18-9*. Xuanzang likewise records the ubiquitous and related practice of enshrining sūtra verses in mini-stūpas as dharma relics. *T. no. 2087, 51: 920a21-6*.

<sup>79</sup> Another contemporary example is that of the *kokerakyō* 柿經 (strips of wood in the shape of pagodas with inscriptions of sūtra text). The earliest mention of *kokerakyō* comes from the *Hyakurenshō*, a thirteenth-century anthology of various records and tales by an unknown compiler. In the tenth month and eleventh day of 1181, *Hyakurenshō* records that Taira Shigemori (1138-79) told Goshirakawa of his dream in which one thousand volumes of the *Heart Sūtra* were copied onto *kokerakyō* in order to pacify the troubled spirits of the war dead. Learning of this dream, Goshirakawa commissioned twelve barrels of *kokerakyō*, setting them

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adrift upon the east and west seas. Kuroita Katsumi, ed., “Hyakurenshō,” in *Shintei zōho, kokushi taikei*, vol. 11, 105, and Tanaka Kaidō, *Nihon shakyō sōkan* (Kyoto: Shibunkaku, 1974), 28.

<sup>80</sup> Komatsu, *Heike nōkyō no kenkyū*, vol. 1, 47.

<sup>81</sup> Hurvitz, *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom of the Fine Dharma*, 160. *T. no.* 262, 9: 30c17-21.

<sup>82</sup> Ishida Mosaku, “Gangōji gokurakubō hakken no kokerakyō,” in *Gangōji gokurakubō: chūsei shomin shinkō shiryō no kenkyū*, ed. Gorai Shigeru (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1964), 229.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Miya, *Kinji hōtō mandara*, 7.

<sup>85</sup> Hurvitz, *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom of the Fine Dharma*, 232-36. *T. no.* 262, 9: 45b-46b.

<sup>86</sup> For discussions on the *trikāya* (three bodies of the Buddha) system, see Nagao Gadjin, “On the Theory of Buddha-body: *Buddha-kāya*,” trans. Hirano Umeyo, *Eastern Buddhist* 6 (1973): 25-53; Lewis R. Lancaster, “An Early Mahāyāna Sermon about the Body of the Buddha and the Making of Images,” *Artibus Asiae* 36 (1974): 287-91; Lewis R. Lancaster, “The Oldest Mahāyāna Sūtra: Its Significance for the Study of Buddhist Development,” *Eastern Buddhist* 8 (1975): 46; and Robert H. Sharf, *Coming to Terms with Chinese Buddhism: A Reading of the Treasure Store House* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i, 2002), 100-11.

<sup>87</sup> An examination of the occurrences of *dharmakāya* in early texts reveals that the uses of the term identified it as the ‘collection of teachings,’ or ‘body of teachings,’ and as the ‘collection of dharmas’ in which followers could seek refuge and access to the Buddha and his law after the *parinirvāṇa*, rather than the highly conceptual body of the *trikāya* system. Over time, scholarship on the Buddha body doctrine has corrected the tendency in earlier studies to nominalize the early uses of *dharmakāya* and to ignore the plural forms of the term, resulting in what many scholars have described as an anachronistic reading of *dharmakāya* as the fully developed transcendental



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body corresponding to the later *trikāya* theory, effectively mischaracterizing the development of the doctrine as far too consistent and tidy. For more on this issue, see Paul Harrison, “Is the *Dharma-kāya* the Real ‘Phantom Body’ of the Buddha?,” *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 15, no. 1 (1992): 44-94.

<sup>88</sup> Hurvitz, *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom of the Fine Dharma*, 163. T. no. 262, 9: 31b26-29.

<sup>89</sup> Hurvitz, *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom of the Fine Dharma*, 176. T. no. 262, 9: 34b12.

<sup>90</sup> Hurvitz, *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom of the Fine Dharma*, 159. T. no. 262, 9: 30c11-13.

<sup>91</sup> John S. Strong, *Relics of the Buddha* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 32.

<sup>92</sup> For early Pali, Sanskrit, and Tibetan texts expounding stūpas as bodies of the Buddha, see Gustav Roth, “Symbolism of the Buddhist Stūpa according to the Tibetan version of the Caitya-vibhāga-vinayodbhāva-sūtra, the Sanskrit treatise Stūpa-lakṣaṇa-kārikā-vivecana, and a corresponding passage in Kuladattas Kriyāsaṃgraha,” in *The Stūpa. Its Religious, Historical and Architectural Significance*, ed. Anna Libera Dallapiccola in collaboration with Stephanie Zingel-Avé Lallemand (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1980), 183-209 and Adrian Snodgrass, *The Symbolism of the Stupa* (Ithaca: Cornell Southeast Asia Program, 1985), 360-77.

<sup>93</sup> For more on this topic, see David Gardiner, “Maṇḍala, Maṇḍala on the Wall: Variations of Usage in the Shingon School,” *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 19, no. 2 (1996): 245-79 and Fabio Rambelli, *A Buddhist Theory of Semiotics* (London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 56-66, 144-48, 166-67.

<sup>94</sup> Hurvitz, *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom of the Fine Dharma*, 168. T. no. 262, 9: 32c15-16.

<sup>95</sup> For more on the issues of presence and embodiment in icons, relics, and pagodas, see Helmut Brinker, *Secrets of the Sacred: Empowering Buddhist Images in Clear, in Code, and in Cache* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2011); Bernard Faure, *The Rhetoric of Immediacy: A*

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*Critical Critique of Chan/Zen Buddhism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991); Jacob N. Kinnard, "The Field of the Buddha's Presence," in *Embodying the Dharma: Buddhist Relic Veneration in Asia*, eds. David Germano and Kevin Trainor (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004), 117-43; Jacob N. Kinnard, *Imaging Wisdom: Seeing and Knowing in the Art of Indian Buddhism* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 1999), 25-44; Robert H. Sharf, "The Idolization of Enlightenment: On the Mummification of Ch'an Masters in Medieval China," *History of Religions* 32, no. 1 (1992): 1-31; Robert H. Sharf, "Introduction: Prolegomenon to the Study of Japanese Buddhist Icon," in *Living Images: Japanese Buddhist Icons in Context*, eds. Robert H. Sharf and Elizabeth Horton Sharf (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 1-18; and Robert H. Sharf, "On the Allure of Buddhist Relics," *Representations* 66 (1999): 75-99.

<sup>96</sup> For instance, W.J.T. Mitchell characterizes the relationship of the word and image as two countries that share a long history of relations but speak different languages. See W.T.J. Mitchell, "Word and Image," in *Critical Terms for Art History*, eds. Robert S. Nelson and Richard Shiff (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 53. Gombrich declares that "statements cannot be translated into images" and that "pictures cannot assert." See Ernst Gombrich, *The Image and The Eye: Further Studies in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1994), 138 and 175.

<sup>97</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Vintage, 1973), 9.

<sup>98</sup> Michel Foucault, *This Is Not a Pipe*, trans. and ed. James Harkness (Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, 1983), 20-21. Also relevant here is Peter Wagner's use of *iconotext* in which words and pictures intermingle within a specified framework. See Peter

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Wagner, *Reading Iconotexts: From Swift to the French Revolution* (London: Reaktion Books, Ltd., 1995).

<sup>99</sup> Foucault, *This Is Not a Pipe*, 22.

<sup>100</sup> Abé, *The Weaving of Mantra*, 276.

<sup>101</sup> This is not an exhaustive list, and the reader will likely be aware of further examples.

<sup>102</sup> Sasaki Kōkan, “Sō no jushika to ō no saishika: bukkō to ōsei to no musubitsuki ni kansuru ichi shiron,” in *Kokka to tennō: tennōsei ideorogi to shite no bukkō*, ed. Kuroda Toshio (Tokyo: Shujūsha, 1987), 53. For more on *tendoku*, see Shimizu Masumi, “Nōdoku to nōsetsu: ongei ‘dokyō’ no ryōiki to tenkai,” *Ryōjin: kenkyū to shiryō* 15 (1997): 25-29.

<sup>103</sup> Sasaki, “Sō no jushika to ō no saishika,” 52.

<sup>104</sup> Kyoko Motomochi Nakamura, trans., *Miraculous Stories from the Japanese Buddhist Tradition: The Nihon Ryōiki of the Monk Kyōkai* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), 186-87. Keikai, “Nihon Ryōiki,” in *Nihon koten bungaku zenshū*, ed. Nakada Norio, 12 vols. (Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 1975), vol. 6, 197-99.

<sup>105</sup> This occurs in reference to the transcription and dedication service of the *Lotus Sūtra* at Muryōju in 無量壽院 sponsored by the Empress Fujiwara Kenshi (994-1027). See Fujiwara Sanesuke, *Shōyūki* 小右記, in *Dai nihon kokiroku* 大日本古記録 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1971), vol. 6, 46. Egami Yasushi, “Sōshokukyō,” *Nihon no bijutsu* 278 (1989): 19.

<sup>106</sup> Kuroita, “Hyakurenshō,” 65.

<sup>107</sup> Fabio Rambelli, *Buddhist Materiality: A Cultural History of Objects in Japanese Buddhism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 90.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 96.

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<sup>109</sup> For instance this recent article: Elizabeth ten Grotenhuis, “Collapsing the Distinction Between Buddha and Believer: Human Hair in Japanese Esotericizing Embroideries,” in *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia*, eds. Charles D. Orzech, Henrik H. Sørensen, and Richard K. Payne (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2011), 876-92.

<sup>110</sup> Kevin Carr, “The Material Facts of Ritual: Revisioning Medieval Viewing through Material Analysis, Ethnographic Analogy, and Architectural History,” in *A Companion to Asian Art and Architecture*, eds. Rebecca M. Brown and Deborah S. Hutton (Blackwell, 2011), 23-47.

<sup>111</sup> I pursue this argument further in my book manuscript by developing what I term a *salvific matrix of text and body* to interpret the mandalas’ combinatory composition.

<sup>112</sup> For a brief introduction to *shōgon* with further citations for sources on the subject, see Andrew M. Watsky, *Chikubushima: Deploying the Sacred Arts in Momoyama Japan* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2004), 36. Also see Christian Boehm, *The Concept of Danzō: ‘Sandalwood Images’ in Japanese Buddhist Sculpture of the 8<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> Centuries* (London: Saffron Books, EAP, 2012), 107-16.

<sup>113</sup> Rambelli, *Buddhist Materiality*, 88-90.

<sup>114</sup> Richard K. Payne, “Awakening and Language: Indic Theories of Language in the Background of Japanese Esoteric Buddhism,” in *Discourse and Ideology in Medieval Japanese Buddhism*, eds. Richard R. Payne and Taigen Dan Leighton (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 89.

<sup>115</sup> Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983), 12.